

Contributions

"THE WORD OF FAITH"

S. KIEHL

"He that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Rom. 10:4-10.

This word of faith is in the ninth verse, and the application to be made is in the eighth verse. Is it nigh thee? Is it in thy mouth and in thy heart? It is written, Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Jer. 23:29. This word of faith as a fire will purify your thoughts, desires and aspirations concerning God and his cause and as a hammer it will break your rock of self-righteousness into atoms so small that there will not be left even a speck of dust; and God thru Christ will have all the glory. "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

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NOT A GOOD SIGN

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It cannot be denied that in these days there is a great reaction from the views which were held half a century or more ago concerning the character of God and his attitude toward sinners. In those days very many ministers of the gospel frequently held up to their hearers the sterner aspects of God's character, and they represented him as being very angry with all willful transgressors of his laws and commands. It was then often declared that it was "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Possibly ministers and other Christians in those days went to unwarranted extremes in their emphasizing the justice and judgments of God. Certainly there is now a reaction to the other extreme, which largely consists in either making light of God's wrath against sinners or of silently ignoring it; but this is not a good sign. Extremes in any direction are always unhealthy. As one evidence of an unhealthy moral condition I will quote from a printed letter which was written by Rev. B. B. Tyler, a Disciple minister, who

refers to the notable sermon preached by Jonathan Edwards on the theme, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." Mr. Edwards died in 1758. Mr. Tyler says: "This discourse was delivered in the midst of the great revival in New England, in the eighteenth century. There is a tradition which says that men were so alarmed when Mr. Edwards delivered this discourse that they cried aloud, and some seized the pillars in the church that they might not slip into the awful chasm of a burning hell! I read this discourse last summer in Cambridge to a company of Harvard students. The reading was frequently interrupted, not by cries of fear, but by laughter! There was nothing terrible in that discourse to nineteenth century students in the oldest of our American universities. There is nothing in it to excite terror in the mind of any intelligent person at the present time. Our views of God, man, sin, salvation and punishment are so unlike the views entertained by the people of New England in the first half of the eighteenth century that the sermon excites only merriment."

I say this is a bad sign. Mr. Tyler is lending his influence to encourage skepticism in those young people who are trying to throw off all fear of God. Perhaps he would advise young people to laugh at these words of Christ's; "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Also these words concerning those who die in their sins: "The smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night." It is a grave thing for any one to indulge in merriment over the coming day of Divine Judgment, or even the present wrath of God against sin.

DANGERS, DIFFICULTIES, AND DISCOURAGEMENTS OF AN ISOLATED RELIGIOUS LIFE

THOS. GIBSON.

The word isolated virtually signifies "to be placed by itself." And when applied to a person, would mean, to be placed by oneself, and to live an isolated religious life, would mean, to be cast off from all religious intercourse but such a condition of life is almost impossible in a Christianized country. To be an isolated Christian is generally understood to mean to be separated from the church of one's choice, and from those who are of like precious faith. However in either case or condition, the divine nature is apt to become dwarfed, and the spiritual affection alluminated from God. Religious isolation is decidedly injurious to the spiritual affections. The dangers of an isolated religious life are many, and not the least is the danger of relapsing into apostasy and departing from the proffered principles of religion. Isolation has caused not a few to "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, thru the hypocrisy of men that speak lies." One danger which is occasionally happening to isolated Christians, is indifference or luke-

warmness. That awful condition which our God looks upon with detestable abhorrence. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would that thou wert cold or hot, so because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Rev. 3:15. To be a moderately warm Christian is a dangerous condition to be in. There is imminent danger of separation from God. God's warmth is hanging over the one who is lukewarm, and unconcerned about spiritual warmth. The Lord delights to see his children exhibit energetic force of body and mind, he loves to see his children filled with passionate ardor, and eagerly zealous for his cause. But lukewarmness is detestable to him. Religious isolated is detrimental to spiritual life, and the damage and injury to the spiritual affections in some cases is incalculable, and the breaks made in Christian character by the inroads of sin in its various forms is almost irreparable. Christian fellowship is conducive to the very highest spiritual attainment. "To be filled with all the fullness of God," is the highest possible spiritual attainment, we cannot aspire to any higher success. There is no wider, or nobler possibilities attainable. When that exalted spiritual manhood "the measure and stature of Christ" has been attained, we will have reached our highest sphere of usefulness. It is our God given privilege to be thus filled. And for this glorious acquirement God has provided certain means. There is a great many things which are essential to the development of Christian character, which we will notice later. Each one exercises a considerable degree of influence over his or her associate. By certain circumstances our life, are pretty much ruled. Our material surroundings have much to do with the kind of a life we live. Our nature's are either brightened or darkened by our environment. To a certain extent we become like those we associate with.

However it is possible to live pure and faultless lives independent of our surroundings. There is always exception to every rule. It has been said that "we grow in the divine life only as we keep in touch with God who is the source of life." Many noble Christian characters have been isolated from all religious influence, and yet have lived pure and devoted Christian lives, not being influenced by the ungodly lives of those they came in contract with such, men as St. Paul, Dr. Livingston, Wm. Carey, Bishop Taylor, and a host of others who have spent the best part of their lives in dark continents enlightening the darkened minds of the heathen. But such men were constantly in touch with God, these were men who had a large measure of God's spirit, and were deeply impressed with a sense of the hatefulness, of sin. But the great majority of Christians if their surroundings were such that they were deprived of all religious influence, and were compelled to associate with the profane, immoral,